

Birds of North Dakota

Field Checklist



Chris Grondahl, NDGF

The following checklist includes 354 species of birds that are possible to see in North Dakota. Of these 354, there are 18 species that are either summer residents, periodic inhabitants, or primary migrants that are referred to as inferred nesting species. Inferred nesting species are those that have been seen during the breeding season but no actual nests have been found.

The dates for the season used in this checklist are defined as: Spring: March 15 - May 31; Summer: June 1 - July 31; Fall: August 1 - November 15; Winter: November 15 - March 14.

It is suggested you keep this field checklist through many seasons and record the date when you see a new bird. This will allow you to keep a "life list" and enjoy the experience of sighting and recording North Dakota bird species.

Abbreviations used in the checklist in relation to relative abundance are as follows:

- ? Ab - ABUNDANT; a species that occurs in very large numbers and is easily observed.
- ? C - COMMON; a species that occurs in large numbers.
- ? F - FAIRLY COMMON; a species that occurs in moderate numbers.
- ? U - UNCOMMON; a species that occurs in low numbers.
- ? R - RARE; a species that occurs yearly somewhere in the state, but in very low numbers.
- ? O - OCCASIONAL; a rare species that occurs at intervals of 3 - 5 years.
- ? Ac - ACCIDENTAL; a species that is not expected to occur again or that occurs very infrequently. This classification includes species that have occurred in the state three or fewer times.
- ? E - EXTIRPATED; a species that formerly occurred naturally in the state.
- ? * - Breeds in North Dakota
- ? (i) - Inferred nesting species.

Birds of North Dakota

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	<i>FAMILY GAVIIDAE</i>				
	Red-throated loon			Ac	
	*Common loon	U	U	U	
	<i>FAMILY PODICIPEDIDAE</i>				
	*Pied-billed grebe	F	F	F	
	*Horned Grebe	F	F	F	
	*Red-necked grebe	U	F	U	
	*Eared grebe	C	C	C	
	*Western grebe	F	C	U	
	*Clark's grebe	U	U	U	
	<i>FAMILY PELECANIDAE</i>				
	*American white pelican	U	C	U	
	Brown pelican			Ac	
	<i>FAMILY PHALACROCORACIDAE</i>				
	*Double-crested cormorant	F	F	F	
	<i>FAMILY ARDEIDAE</i>				
	*American bittern	F	F	F	
	*Least bittern	R	R	R	
	*Great blue heron	F	F	F	
	Great egret	R	R	U	
	Snowy egret	O	O	O	
	*Little blue heron	O	O	O	
	*Tricolored heron	O	O	O	
	*Cattle egret	R	R	R	
	*Green-backed heron	R	R	R	
	*Black-crowned night-heron	F	C	F	
	Yellow-crowned night-heron	O	O		

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	<i>FAMILY THRESKIORNITHIDAE</i>				
	White ibis	Ac			
	*White-faced ibis	O	O	O	
	<i>FAMILY CICONIIDAE</i>				
	Wood stork	Ac			
	<i>FAMILY ANATIDAE</i>				
	Fulvous whistling-duck		Ac	Ac	
	*Tundra swan	C		C	
	*Trumpeter swan		E	Ac	
	Greater white-fronted goose	F		F	
	*Snow goose	Ab	O	Ab	R
	Ross' goose	R		R	
	Brant	O		O	
	*Canada goose	Ab	F	Ab	R
	*Wood duck	U	F	F	
	*Green-winged teal	F	U	C	
	*American black duck	R	R	U	R
	*Mallard	Ab	C	Ab	U
	*Northern pintail	Ab	C	Ab	O
	*Blue-winged teal	Ab	Ab	Ab	
	*Cinnamon teal	R	R	R	
	*Northern shoveler	C	C	C	
	*Gadwall	C	C	C	O
	Eurasian wigeon	Ac		Ac	
	*American wigeon	C	U	C	R
	*Canvasback	F	F	C	O
	*Redhead	C	C	C	O
	*Ring-necked duck	U	F	F	

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	Greater scaup	R		U	
	*Lesser scaup	Ab	U	Ab	O
	Common eider			Ac	Ac
	Harlequin duck			Ac	
	Oldsquaw	R		R	O
	Black scoter	R		R	
	Surf scoter	R		R	O
	*White-winged scoter	R	E	E	
	*Common goldeneye	U	R	U	R
	Barrow's goldeneye				O
	*Bufflehead	F	R	F	O
	*Hooded merganser	U	F	U	
	*Common merganser	F	E	F	U
	Red-breasted merganser	R	R		
	*Ruddy duck	C	C	C	
	<i>FAMILY CATHARTIDAE</i>				
	*Turkey Vulture	U	F	U	
	<i>FAMILY ACCIPITRIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Pandion</i>				
	*Osprey	R	R	R	
	<i>Subfamily Accipitrinae</i>				
	American swallow-tailed kite	Ac			
	*Bald Eagle	U	R	U	R
	*Northern harrier	C	F	C	R
	*Sharp-shinned hawk	F	U	F	O
	*Cooper's hawk	U	U	U	O
	*Northern goshawk	R	O	R	R
	Red-shouldered hawk	O	O	O	

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Broad-winged hawk	U	F	U	
	*Swainson's hawk	C	C	C	
	*Red-tailed hawk	C	F	C	R
	*Ferruginous hawk	F	C	F	
	Rough-legged hawk	F		F	R
	*Golden eagle	F	F	F	F
	<i>FAMILY FALCONIDAE</i>				
	*American kestrel	C	F	C	R
	*Merlin	U	R	U	R
	*Peregrine falcon	R	O	R	O
	Gyr Falcon	O		O	O
	*Prairie falcon	U	U	F	R
	<i>FAMILY PHASIANIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Phasianinae</i>				
	*Gray partridge	C	C	C	C
	*Ring-necked pheasant	C	C	C	C
	<i>Subfamily Tetraoninae</i>				
	Willow ptarmigan			Ac	
	*Ruffed grouse	F	F	F	F
	*Sage grouse	F	F	F	F
	*Greater prairie-chicken	U	U	U	U
	*Sharp-tailed grouse	C	C	C	C
	<i>Subfamily Meleagridinae</i>				
	*Wild turkey	F	F	F	F
	<i>FAMILY RALLIDAE</i>				
	*Yellow rail	R	R	R	
	(i)King rail	O	O	O	
	*Virginia rail	F	F	F	

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Sora	C	C	C	
	*American coot	Ab	Ab	Ab	
	<i>FAMILY GRUIDAE</i>				
	*Sandhill crane	F	R	Ab	
	*Whooping crane	R	E	R	
	<i>FAMILY CHARADRIIDAE</i>				
	Black-bellied plover	U		U	
	Lesser golden plover	F		U	
	Semipalmated plover	F		F	
	*Piping plover	U	U	U	
	*Killdeer	C	C	C	Ac
	*Mountain plover	E	E	E	
	<i>FAMILY RECURVIROSTRIDAE</i>				
	Black-necked stilt	O		O	
	*American avocet	C	C	C	
	<i>FAMILY SCOLOPACIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Scolopacinae</i>				
	Greater yellowlegs	F		F	
	Lesser yellowlegs	C		C	
	Solitary sandpiper	U		U	
	*Willet	F	F	U	
	*Spotted sandpiper	U	U	U	
	*Upland sandpiper	F	F	F	
	Eskimo curlew	E		E	
	Whimbrel	O		O	
	*Long-billed curlew	R	U	R	
	Hudsonian godwit	F		R	
	*Marbled godwit	F	F	U	

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	Ruddy turnstone	U		R	
	Red knot	R		R	
	Sanderling	U		U	
	Semipalmated sandpiper	Ab		Ab	
	Western sandpiper	O		R	
	Least sandpiper	C		C	
	White-rumped sandpiper	Ab		R	
	Baird's sandpiper	C		F	
	Pectoral sandpiper	C		F	
	Dunlin	U		U	
	Curlew sandpiper	Ac			
	Stilt sandpiper	F		C	
	Buff-breasted sandpiper	R		R	
	Ruff	Ac		Ac	
	Short-billed dowitcher	U		U	
	Long-billed dowitcher	C		C	
	*Common snipe	C	U	C	Ac
	*American woodcock	R	R	R	
	<i>Subfamily Phalaropinae</i>				
	*Wilson's phalarope	C	C	C	
	Red-necked phalarope	Ab		Ab	
	Red phalarope	O	O	O	
	<i>FAMILY LARIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Stercorainae</i>				
	Parasitic jaeger			Ac	
	Long-tailed jaeger		Ac	Ac	
	South polar skua		Ac		
	<i>Subfamily Larinae</i>				

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Franklin's gull	Ab	C	Ab	
	Bonaparte's gull	F		F	
	*Ring-billed gull	C	C	C	R
	*California gull	F	F	F	O
	Herring gull	F		F	U
	Thayer's gull	O		O	O
	Glaucous gull	R		U	R
	Black-legged kittiwake			O	O
	Sabine's gull			O	
	<i>Subfamily Sterninae</i>				
	*Caspian tern	O	O	O	
	*Common tern	U	F	U	
	*Forster's tern	U	F	U	
	*Least tern	R	R	R	
	*Black tern	C	C	Ab	
	<i>FAMILY COLUMBIDAE</i>				
	*Rock dove	C	C	C	C
	*Mourning dove	Ab	C	Ab	R
	<i>FAMILY CUCULIDAE</i>				
	*Black-billed cuckoo	F	F	U	
	*Yellow-billed cuckoo	R	R	R	
	<i>FAMILY TYTONIDAE</i>				
	*Common barn-owl	O	O	O	
	<i>FAMILY STRIGIDAE</i>				
	*Eastern screech-owl	U	U	U	U
	*Great horned owl	F	F	F	F
	Snowy owl	R		U	R
	Northern hawk owl	O		O	O

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Burrowing owl	U	F	U	
	(i)Barred owl	R	R	R	R
	Great gray owl			O	O
	*Long-eared owl	R	U	R	R
	*Short-eared owl	F	F	F	U
	Boreal owl			O	O
	(i)Northern saw-whet owl	R	O	R	R
	<i>FAMILY CAPRIMULGIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Chordelinae</i>				
	*Common nighthawk	C	U	C	
	<i>Subfamily Caprimulginae</i>				
	(i)Poor-will	U	F	R	
	(i)Whip-poor-will	R	R		
	<i>FAMILY APODIDAE</i>				
	*Chimney swift	C	F	F	
	<i>FAMILY TROCHILIDAE</i>				
	*Ruby-throated hummingbird	U	F	F	
	<i>FAMILY ALCEDINIDAE</i>				
	*Belted kingfisher	F	F	F	R
	<i>FAMILY PICIDAE</i>				
	Lewis' woodpecker	Ac		Ac	
	*Red-headed woodpecker	F	F	F	
	*Red-bellied woodpecker	R	O	R	R
	*Yellow-bellied sapsucker	U	F	U	
	*Downy woodpecker	F	F	F	F
	*Hairy woodpecker	F	F	F	F
	Black-backed woodpecker			O	O
	*Northern flicker	C	C	C	R

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Pileated woodpecker	U	U	U	U
	<i>FAMILY TYRANNIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Fluvicolinae</i>				
	Olive-sided flycatcher	U		U	
	(i)Western wood-pewee	U	U	U	
	*Eastern wood-pewee	C	C	C	
	Yellow-bellied flycatcher	U		U	
	*Alder flycatcher	R	R	R	
	*Willow flycatcher	F	F	F	
	*Least flycatcher	C	C	C	
	*Eastern phoebe	U	U	U	
	*Say's phoebe	U	U	U	
	<i>Subfamily Tyranninae</i>				
	*Great crested flycatcher	F	F	F	
	*Western kingbird	C	C	Ab	
	*Eastern kingbird	C	C	Ab	
	Scissor-tailed flycatcher	Ac		Ac	
	<i>FAMILY ALAUDIDAE</i>				
	*Horned lark	Ab	Ab	Ab	U
	<i>FAMILY HIRUNDINIDAE</i>				
	*Purple martin	F	F	F	
	*Tree swallow	C	F	F	
	(i)Violet-green swallow	R	O	R	
	*Northern rough-winged swallow	F	F	F	
	*Bank swallow	C	C	Ab	
	*Cliff swallow	Ab	Ab	Ab	
	*Barn swallow	Ab	Ab	Ab	
	<i>FAMILY CORVIDAE</i>				

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	Gray jay			O	O
	*Blue jay	F	F	F	U
	Pinyon jay			Ac	Ac
	Clark's nutcracker	O		O	O
	*Black-billed magpie	F	C	C	F
	*American crow	C	F	C	R
	*Common raven	O	E		R
	<i>FAMILY PARIDAE</i>				
	*Black-capped chickadee	F	F	F	F
	Boreal chickadee			Ac	
	<i>FAMILY SITTIDAE</i>				
	*Red-breasted nuthatch	U	O	U	R
	*White-breasted nuthatch	F	F	F	F
	<i>FAMILY CERTHIDAE</i>				
	(i)Brown creeper	F	O	F	R
	<i>FAMILY TROGLODYTIDAE</i>				
	*Rock wren	U	F	U	
	*House wren	C	C	F	
	Winter wren	R		R	Ac
	*Sedge wren	U	F	U	
	*Marsh wren	F	C	F	
	<i>FAMILY MUSICAPIDAE</i>				
	<i>subfamily Sylviinae</i>				
	Golden-crowned kinglet	F		F	R
	Ruby-crowned kinglet	F	R	F	
	Blue-gray gnatcatcher	Ac		Ac	
	<i>Subfamily Turdinae</i>				
	*Eastern bluebird	F	F	U	

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Mountain bluebird	F	F	U	
	Townsend's solitaire	U		U	U
	*Veery	U	C	U	
	Gray-cheeked thrush	F		F	
	(i)Swainson's thrush	C	O	C	
	Hermit thrush	U		U	O
	*Wood thrush	R	R	R	
	*American robin	Ab	C	Ab	R
	Varied thrush	O			O
	<i>FAMILY MIMIDAE</i>				
	*Gray catbird	C	F	C	
	*Northern mockingbird	R	R	R	
	(i)Sage thrasher	O	O		
	*Brown thrasher	F	F	F	
	<i>FAMILY MOTACILLIDAE</i>				
	Water pipit	F		F	
	*Sprague's pipit	U	F	F	
	<i>FAMILY BOMBYCILLIDAE</i>				
	Bohemian waxwing	U		U	F
	*Cedar waxwing	F	F	F	U
	<i>FAMILY LANIDAE</i>				
	Northern shrike	R		U	U
	*Loggerhead shrike	U	F	U	
	<i>FAMILY STURNIDAE</i>				
	*European Starling	F	F	F	F
	*Red-eyed vireo	C	C	C	
	<i>FAMILY EMBERIZIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Parulinae</i>				

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	Blue-winged warbler	Ac			
	*Golden-winged warbler	R	R	R	
	(i)Tennessee warbler	Ab	O	C	
	(i)Orange-crowned warbler	C	R	C	
	Nashville warbler	U		U	
	(i)Northern parula	R	O	R	
	*Yellow warbler	C	C	C	
	*Chestnut-sided warbler	F	R	F	
	Magnolia warbler	U		U	
	Cape May warbler	R		O	
	Black-throated blue warbler	R		R	
	*Yellow-rumped warbler	Ab	U	Ab	
	Townsend's warbler			Ac	
	Black-throated green warbler	U		U	
	Blackburnian warbler	U		U	
	Pine warbler	O		O	
	Palm warbler	F		F	
	Bay-breasted warbler	U		U	
	Blackpoll warbler	C		F	
	(i)Cerulean warbler	O		O	
	*Black-and-white warbler	F	F	F	
	*American Redstart	C	C	C	
	Prothonotary warbler	Ac			
	Worm-eating warbler	Ac			
	*Ovenbird	F	F	F	
	*Northern waterthrush	F	F	F	
	Louisiana waterthrush	Ac			
	Connecticut warbler	R		R	

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Mourning warbler	F	F	F	
	MacGillivray's warbler	O		O	
	*Common yellowthroat	C	C	C	
	Hooded warbler	Ac			
	Wilson's warbler	F		C	
	(i)Canada warbler	U	O	U	
	*Yellow-breasted chat	F	F	F	
	<i>Subfamily Thraupinae</i>				
	Summer tanager	Ac	Ac		
	*Scarlet tanager	F	F	F	
	(i)Western tanager	R	R		
	<i>Subfamily Cardinalinae</i>				
	*Northern cardinal	R	R	R	
	*Rose-breasted grosbeak	C	C	C	
	*Black-headed grosbeak	F	F	F	
	*Blue grosbeak	O	O	O	
	*Lazuli bunting	C	C	C	
	*Indigo bunting	F	F	F	
	*Dickcissel	U	F	U	
	<i>Subfamily Emberizinae</i>				
	Green-tailed towhee	Ac			
	*Rufous-sided towhee	F	C	U	O
	American tree sparrow	C		C	U
	*Chipping sparrow	F	F	F	
	*Clay-colored sparrow	C	Ab	C	
	*Brewer's sparrow	U	C	U	
	*Field sparrow	U	F	U	
	*Vesper sparrow	F	C	F	O

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Lark sparrow	F	F	F	
	*Lark bunting	Ab	Ab	Ab	
	*Savannah sparrow	Ab	C	Ab	
	*Baird's sparrow	F	F	F	
	*Grasshopper sparrow	C	C	C	
	Henslow's sparrow		O	Ac	
	*Le Conte's sparrow	U	F	U	
	*Sharp-tailed sparrow	U	F	U	
	Fox sparrow	U		U	Ac
	*Song sparrow	C	C	C	O
	Lincoln's sparrow	C		C	
	*Swamp sparrow	U	U	U	
	*White-throated sparrow	C	U	C	R
	Golden-crowned sparrow	Ac			
	White-crowned sparrow	C		C	R
	Harris' sparrow	C		C	R
	Dark-eyed junco	Ab	O	Ab	R
	*McCown's longspur	U	U	U	
	Lapland longspur	Ab		Ab	U
	Smith's longspur	R		R	
	*Chestnut-collared longspur	C	Ab	C	
	Snow bunting	F		C	F
	<i>Subfamily Icterinae</i>				
	*Bobolink	F	F	F	
	*Red-winged blackbird	Ab	Ab	Ab	R
	Eastern meadowlark	Ac	Ac		
	*Western meadowlark	Ab	Ab	Ab	R
	*Yellow-headed blackbird	Ab	Ab	Ab	R

Date Observed	Species	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
	*Brewer's blackbird	C	F	C	O
	*Common grackle	Ab	Ab	Ab	R
	*Brown-headed cowbird	C	C	U	
	*Orchard oriole	F	F	R	
	*Northern oriole	F	F	F	
	<i>FAMILY FRINGILLIDAE</i>				
	<i>Subfamily Fringillinae</i>				
	Brambling				Ac
	<i>Subfamily Carduelinae</i>				
	Rosy finch				R
	Pine grosbeak	U		U	U
	*Purple finch	U	R	U	U
	House finch				Ac
	*Red crossbill	U	R	U	U
	(i)White-winged crossbill	R	O	R	U
	Common redpoll	F		C	U
	Hoary redpoll	R			R
	*Pine siskin	F	R	F	U
	*Lesser goldfinch		Ac		
	*American goldfinch	F	F	F	U
	Evening grosbeak	U		U	U
	<i>FAMILY PASSERIDAE</i>				
	House sparrow	C	C	C	C

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information used for this checklist was primarily taken from the following source:

*Faanes, C. A., and R.E. Stewart, 1982.
Revised Checklist of North Dakota Birds;
The Prairie Naturalist, Vol. 14 (3): 81-92*